

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough review of the present application, and respectfully request reconsideration in light of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-5, 8-10 and 20-32 are pending in the instant application. New claims 27-32 readable on the elected invention/species have been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The added claims find solid support in at least FIG. 3 at bill validator 22, and FIG. 5 at 520 of the application as filed. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

Issues raised by the Final Office Action

The final rejections of relying primarily on *Parish* and *Vogt* are traversed for the reasons presented in the previous Amendment papers which are incorporated by reference herein.

Issues raised by the Advisory Action

The rejections are also traversed because the references are not combinable in the manner proposed by the Examiner in the Advisory Action.

It should be noted that *Parish* discloses a technique of diverting liquid away from the bill validator. The purpose of *Parish* is to prevent liquid from entering the bill validator. The *Parish* validator 60 (FIG. 2) is also shown in FIGs. 11-12 as the unnumbered portion where reference numerals 152, 116, 122, 158, 184, 160 and 122 are. *Vogt* discloses a completely different technique wherein liquid is allowed to enter the bill validator 120 and is collected only afterwards. *See*, for example, *Vogt* at column 3 lines 65-66. A person of ordinary skill in the art learning of the techniques of *Parish* and *Vogt* would recognize that *Vogt* is not combinable with *Parish*, because the liquid container 10 of *Vogt* would be redundant in the *Parish* vending machine. The reason is

that no liquid would be able to enter the bill validator to be collected afterwards in the *Vogt* container 10.

In response the Examiner's position that it would have been within the ordinary skill in the art to move the reader/bill validator of *Parish* further back into the device, Applicants respectfully submit that the mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious. Further, even if the reader/bill validator of *Parish* was moved further back into the device, the slotted bill guide plate 100/108 of *Parish* would remain on the outside, and would thus drain all liquid outwardly. No liquid would be allowed to enter the further-moved-back bill validator, rendering any container (as taught by *Vogt*) below the bill validator unnecessary. The modified *Parish* machine would still not be combinable with *Vogt*.

In response to the Examiner's allegation that *Vogt* discloses a more secure drain guiding means to guarantee that foreign matter would not enter areas where electronic components are contained, Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants submit that the arrangement of *Parish* is more secure in that no liquid is allowed to enter the machine at all, and the arrangement of *Vogt* is actually less secure because liquid can enter at least the bill validator 120. A person of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that *Vogt* is inferior to *Parish* in terms of liquid protection, and hence, would not have considered substituting the *Parish* draining means with the *Vogt* draining means as suggested by the Examiner. The reason is that the *Parish* machine after the Examiner's proposed substitution would become less secure.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is believed appropriate and therefore respectfully requested.

New claims

New claims 27-32 have been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The new claims are considered patentable at least for the reasons advanced with respect to the respective independent claims. The new claims also highlight several distinctions between the art and the invention defined in the new claims.

The claimed gaming machine now has (i) a bill validator housed inside the cabinet, rather than being carried on the door as taught by *Parish*, and (ii) a configuration in which the bill guide plate is installed on the door, and the top surface of the bill guide plate is open to the outside through a loading slot. The advantage of this configuration is that bills can be inserted into the bill validator through the bill insertion slot using only one hand. In contrast, the closed configuration of *Parish* and *Vogtas* best seen in FIGs. 11-12 of *Parish* and FIG. 1 at 124 of *Vogt* has the disadvantage that sometimes the user needs to insert a bill (especially an old one) using both hands.

The opened top surface of the bill guide plate or the loading slot, which is located outside the bill validator, may allow vandals to contaminate the bill guide plate by liquid such as drinks and/or solid foreign matter such as tobacco ash. The bill guide plate of the claimed invention is nevertheless easy to clean after being contaminated by liquid and/or foreign matter, thanks to the open space above the bill guide plate. This is neither disclosed, taught nor suggested any of the applied references and would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the Examiner's combination of *Parish* and *Vogt*.

Further, the bill guide plate of the *Parish* machine is installed inside the bill validator, unlike the claimed invention. *Parish* discloses that the configuration of the bill guide plate is to prevent liquid from entering the inside of the machine. However, with the configuration as disclosed by *Parish*, it will be difficult to clean/remove solid foreign matter, such as tobacco ash and food, which has entered the slot 120 and remain attached to the bill guide plate 100/108. In this

case, it will be necessary to open the door of the *Parish* machine and then dismantle the bill validator 60 from inside of the door, in order to remove the foreign matter to clean the bill guide plate 100/108.

The above disadvantage of *Parish* is effectively avoided in the claimed invention. For example, according to the invention as recited in claim 27, the bill guide plate is provided on the upper part of the operating part installed on the front part of the door, and the bill validator is housed in the cabinet. Accordingly, it is unnecessary to open the door when the bill guide plate needs cleaning. In addition, the bill guide plate in the claimed gaming machine is provided outside of the bill validator, so that foreign matter that might have been attached to the bill guide plate can hardly enter the bill validator (which contains electrical components) when the bill guide plate is dismounted from the door for the purpose of cleaning.

The disadvantage of *Parish* is not curable by the teaching reference of *Vogt*. *Vogt* discloses that the machine has a configuration to protect the area between the bill validator 120 and the coin changer 130 from liquid entered from the bill guide plate 126. Column 3 lines 19-20. However, it still is possible that foreign matter such as tobacco ash and/or food may adhere to the *Vogt* bill guide plate which, given the insufficient disclosure of the reference, still appears to require the door to be opened and the bill guide plate to be removed for cleaning. The gaming machine of the claimed invention is superior to by *Parish* and *Vogt* at least in terms of easy cleaning.

In summary, the invention of the new claims has an apparent advantage over the combination of *Parish* and *Vogt* because the bill guide plate can be dismounted without having to open the door to remove foreign matter as well as liquid from the bill guide plate, in order to prevent the foreign matter and liquid from entering electrical components of the machine.

The new claims are thus patentable over the applied art of record.

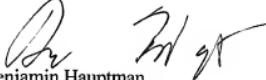
Conclusion

Each of the Examiner's rejections has been traversed/overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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